

WEEKLY CHRONICLE

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Congress Approves Funds For New Port Of Entry

By Mario Conde

The United States Congress approved a resolution approving the expansion of the Calexico land Port of Entry and also to reconfigure the port of entry.

Rep. Bob Filner (D-Chula Vista) stated in a press release last week that as per his request, the primary POV inspection facilities will include 16 northbound inspection lanes and 5 southbound inspection lanes, instead of GSA's original proposal of 3 southbound lanes.

"This project will greatly improve the flow of traffic and pedestrians through the downtown Calexico LPOE," Filner said.

The project comes roughly two years before the opening of the new port of entry that will have its ground breaking the middle of 2011 and could see its opening when the first face is completed in 2013. As reported before by the Calexico Chronicle, the downtown port of entry will now be a pedestrian only entry to

downtown Calexico and the new port of entry will have 16 sentri lanes for vehicular traffic that will enter Calexico through Cesar Chavez Blvd. The City of Calexico has received federal and State funding for Cesar Chavez Blvd/Calexico West Port of Entry Congestion Improvements.

The approved land port of entry expansion project includes new pedestrian processing and privately-owned vehicle inspection facilities, a new head house to provide supervision and services to the non-commercial vehicle inspection area, new administration offices and a parking structure. The expanded facilities will occupy both the existing inspection compound and the site of the former commercial inspection facility, decommissioned in 1996 when commercial traffic was redirected to the newly completed land port of entry six miles east of downtown Calexico.

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The project will be constructed in two phases. Phase I will consist of 10 northbound private own vehicle inspection lanes, a head house and site work necessary to accommodate those facilities on the sloping site. Phase II will consist of the balance of the project including additional site work, a pedestrian processing facility, administrative offices, five southbound POV inspection lanes, six additional northbound POV inspection lanes and the parking structure.

The total estimated project cost is \$298,250,000. A total of \$23,787,000 has already been spent on planning and design. Congress must now appropriate the remaining funding for the project to begin construction. GSA has requested \$84,359,000 for construction in FY2011.